Washington State Health Care Authority

January 5, 2007

The HTA was created by legislation in 2006 to make the state a leader in the way it buys and uses health care. This program impacts coverage decisions made by Medicaid, Labor and Industries, and the Health Care Authority; the Department of Corrections and the Department of Veterans affairs are also voluntarily participating.

Health Technology Selection Process

The HCA Administrator, in consultation with the participating state agencies, selects technologies that will undergo the review process. The Administrator and participating agency leaders designated representatives from their respective agency medical director offices (AMDG Workgroup) as liaisons between the HTA program and the participating agencies, and to act as a consultative body to provide input into program decisions; clinical committee membership; and to prioritize and recommend technologies.

HTA and the AMDG workgroup defined a process for technology selection. Establishing priorities is necessary since the number of health technologies requiring evaluation is more than resources and legislative mandate permit. Additionally, following a defined process and using published criteria enhance the transparency of the program and decisions. The process has the following basic steps:

1) Medical directors identify potential topics
2) New topics are discussed at a meeting among agency medical directors and a consensus decision is made on whether to brief the topic
3) Briefing is prepared for selected technologies to provide basic information on the technology
4) Each agency initially scores the technology using prioritization tool with criteria based on legislation
5) At a subsequent meeting, the AMDG workgroup reaches a consensus decision on the technology priority
6) Interested parties will be able to petition for health technologies to be reviewed through a process that will be finalized by Spring 2007. These technologies will be reviewed using the same prioritization criteria and tools and would be presented to the HCA Administrator.
7) The ranked technologies are presented to the HCA Administrator with an AMDG workgroup recommendation.
8) Technologies not selected can remain on the list for future consideration

Next Steps: Technologies selected for review are posted to the website and a thirty day comment period is opened up. One of the contracted research firms, called a Technology Assessment Center, will then conduct a review of the evidence about safety, effectiveness, and cost comparisons and write a report that summarizes the evidence and the methods used to analyze it. These assessment reports typically take between two and six months to complete. After that, the report is given to a newly formed Health Technology Clinical Committee made up of eleven independent, practicing health care professionals. The Committee meets quarterly and will consider the evidence report in rendering a coverage determination. The overall process is expected to take six to twelve months.